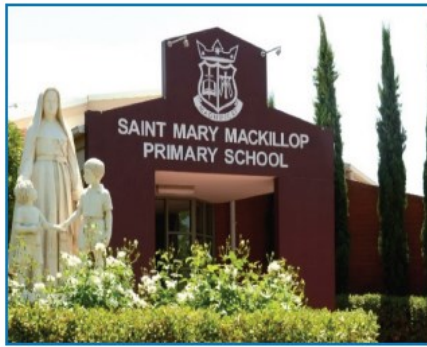


Monday 19 July 2021

ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

152 Odessa Avenue Keilor Downs, Vic 3038 www.mmkeilordowns.catholic.edu.au T: 03 9367 6199



Staying Connected No. 17. 2021.

Dear Families,

Lockdown 5 is here! Home schooling and the uncertainty of 2020/21 have left families feeling anxious and more than a little overwhelmed. We are most probably experiencing what psychologists are calling, COVID fatigue.

I understand the stresses on families as you support your children with on-line remote learning. This is particularly difficult if you have more than one child. I know that is the case for many families. Trying to get three or four children online at the same time with limited devices and/or low bandwidth is a nightmare! I also appreciate many of you are also working from home, so this added pressure must compound the stress.

I sincerely wish you all the best and remind you to look after yourself too. You are no good to your children or to yourself if it all gets too much. Do what you can or must and then let go of some things if you need to. Your mental health is important.

Jennie Monaghan, our Wellbeing Leader, has suggested this 1-hour webinar, as a support, presented by psychologist Andrew Fuller entitled **Support your child's learning and help get their spark back**. It is a free seminar that is being run from **1 – 2 pm** tomorrow **Tuesday 20 July**. If you would like to participate in this webinar please register on the following website:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/163334348433>

Jennie will provide notes on this presentation which I will forward home in the next week.

Despite the stresses, we will bounce back and one day life will return to some sense of normality. As St. Mary Mackillop said on the 19.07.1870, **"Have courage"**. These words of inspiration are very needed today.

I sincerely appreciate the emails of support I have received from families in our school. The staff, leadership and I are working with determination to provide the best possible learning opportunities we can with on-line remote learning. This is not the way we do things and it is by far not the ideal way to teach children and it is not the ideal way for children to have to learn. However, I am really proud of my staff and their resilience and preparedness to step up and do the job and do it to the best of their ability. The staff of SMMPS care about your children and will continue to provide for them.

I have to admit we are getting better at this as we go. The lockdown was announced at 5:00pm on Thursday. However, our staff were ready to prepare the Learning Grids that provide continuity of learning from where the children left off on Thursday. I consider this is better than providing paper worksheets that largely become 'busy' work, which does not enhance learning and adds stress to children and families.

We are getting better at distributing devices. I can't thank enough the staff that stayed late on Thursday evening, readying devices, so that they could be distributed by lunchtime Friday.

You will note that we have prepared Learning Grids for Monday to Friday this week. I am pleased we did so, with the announcement at 11:30am this morning that Lockdown will be extended to a date to be determined. The staff are also preparing Learning Grids for next week. Hopefully they will not be needed. However, we need to be prepared.

STRENGTHS OF SMMPS ON-LINE REMOTE LEARNING

- Continuity of Learning
- Teachers on-line 9am-1pm each day
- Connection with teacher and classmates
- Focus groups
- Intervention provision
- Teacher Feedback each afternoon
- Wellness Wednesday. (Kids need a break from screen time.)

Again, in these trying times, we look to St. Mary MacKillop for inspiration,

"It is our good God who is our support and strength." 11.10.1871

Keep safe everyone. Get tested if needed and when eligible and able get vaccinated.

We call on Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Mary MacKillop to intercede on behalf of our great State of Victoria.



Anthony McCluskey

Principal